

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

A27. XIV.—*Report on Insanity and Idiocy in Massachusetts, by the Commission on Lunacy, under Resolve of the Legislature of 1854.* Mass. Leg. Doc. for 1855: House, No. 144. Boston, 1855, pp. 202.

IN the spring of 1854 the Legislature of Massachusetts passed a resolution "concerning the Insane" in that commonwealth, and creating a Commission, upon which should devolve the duty of performing the labours and accomplishing the objects specified therein. One of these, and the only one of sufficient general interest to occupy much of our attention, was to "ascertain the number and condition of the insane in the State, distinguishing as accurately as may be, between the insane, properly so considered, and the idiotic, or *non compos mentis*; between the furious and the harmless, curable and incurable; and between the native and the foreigner; and the number of each who are State paupers."

The Commissioners appointed under this resolution were the Hon. Levi Lincoln, Dr. Edward Jarvis, and the Hon. Increase Sumner; but, by a note under the signature of the first and the last of these gentlemen, it appears that the labour was mostly performed, and the report drawn up by Dr. Jarvis.

The work could not have fallen into better hands. The State can furnish no person better qualified for the execution of such a commission. Dr. Jarvis has for many years devoted much of his time to the treatment of the insane. He has written extensively upon the subject of insanity. He was the first, if we remember aright, who exposed those gross and truth-perverting statements, which, in some way which has never been satisfactorily explained, crept into the numerals of the insane of the national census for 1840.

It is believed that no census of the insane ever taken in this Union, as a whole, or in any particular State, where the performance of it rested upon officers of the government, has ever been accurate, or even approximated sufficiently near to accuracy to be at all reliable. For example, in the national census for 1850, the number of the insane of Massachusetts is placed at 1,680, and that of the idiotic at 790. Four years afterwards, the Commission under notice found the number nearly fifty per cent. greater; an increase but very partially accounted for by the augmentation of population.

After considering the various means of taking the census, "the Commission determined to address every physician in the State, asking each one to give information relative to the persons and condition of all the lunatics and idiots within his knowledge. They sent a lithograph letter, stating the several objects of inquiry, and inclosed a printed schedule, or form of return, which contained all the heads under which the answers were to be recorded. They asked for the name, sex, colour, age, country of birth; whether single, married, or widowed; whether lunatic or idiot, present and usual condition; whether mild, manageable, troublesome, excitable, furious or dangerous; whether subject for a hospital or not; length of disease; if periodical, the number of attacks; whether curable or not; whether the remedial influences of any hospital had ever been tried for restoration; where resident, if not in the town of the reporter; and whether State or town pauper, or independent. * * * A pledge was given that none but the Commission should see the names of the persons reported, and in fulfilment of this promise, after the reports were prepared and corrections made for the duplications (two or more physicians reporting the same person), the names were erased."

Sixteen towns have no physician within their limits. The clergymen, over

seers of the poor, &c. were accordingly addressed. The subjoined schedule exhibits the extent of the whole of this primary correspondence:—

Physicians within the State	1,556
Clergymen	20
Overseers of the poor	74
Selectmen	4
Other gentlemen	5
Superintendents of hospitals and private establishments in the State	6
Masters of county receptacles, houses of correction, jails, State almshouses	11
Superintendents of hospitals in other States	14
Personal inquiry made of other masters of houses of correction, and jailors	12
	<hr/> 1,702

It was found that 237 of the physicians "were either dead, or not in practice, or had removed away, or were unreliable." Of the remaining 1,319, all but four reported directly or indirectly to the Commission. "Two regular physicians only refused to make any report, and two irregular practitioners have neglected to make returns; but the fields of observation of all these gentlemen were very carefully examined by their more willing or more intelligent neighbours." Every means contributing to thoroughness and accuracy appears to have been brought into requisition by the Commission. They were obliged to "write again and again to many, and to visit and confer with and persuade others in various parts of the State." At the close of the year 1844 the returns were all made, and we fully concur with the Commissioners in the belief that their report is "more complete than could be derived from any other sources, and through any other channels."

From the large number of tables in the Report we condense those statistics which are of most importance, and of the greatest interest to persons without the limits of Massachusetts.

LUNATICS.

Whole number of lunatics in Massachusetts, autumn of 1854	2,632
Natives of America, 2,007; foreigners, 625	2,632
Paupers—693 State, and 829 town	1,522
Supported by their own property, or by their friends	1,110
Curable, 435; incurable, 2018; not stated, 179	2,632
At home or in poorhouses	1,284
In hospitals	1,141
In jails, State almshouses, and other receptacles	207
Males, 1,254; females, 1,378	2,632
Mild, manageable	1,238
Troublesome, excitable	1,067
Furious, dangerous	263
Not stated	64
	<hr/> 2,632
Of the 1,522 pauper lunatics, there were—	
Natives of America, 941; foreigners, 581	1,522
At home—Americans, 539; foreigners, 29	568
In hospital, &c.—Americans, 402; foreigners, 552	954
	<hr/> 1,522
Mild, manageable—Americans, 464; foreigners, 201	665
Excitable, troublesome—Americans, 346; foreigners, 300	646
Furious, dangerous—Americans, 112; foreigners, 75	187
Not stated—Americans, 19; foreigners, 5	24
	<hr/> 1,522

Of the 1,110 independent lunatics, there were—	
Natives of America, 1,066; foreigners, 44	1,110
At home, 716; in hospital, &c. 394	1,110
Mild, manageable—at home, 447; in hospital, &c. 127	574
Excitable, troublesome—at home, 209; in hospital, &c. 212	421
Furious, dangerous—at home, 26; in hospital, &c. 49	75
Not stated—at home, 34; in hospital, &c. 6	40
	1,110
Of the 625 foreigners, there were—paupers, 581; independent, 44	
At home, 57; in hospital, 434; in receptacles and prisons, 103; in State almshouse, 31	625
Mild, manageable	224
Excitable, troublesome	315
Furious, dangerous	81
Not stated	5
	625
Curable, 112; incurable, 506; not stated, 7	625
Natives of Ireland, 512; Great Britain, 49; Germany, 23; British Provinces, 17; France, 6; Sweden, 3; Holland, 2; Italy, 2; Spain, 1; Austria, 1; Greece, 1; Egypt, 1; unknown, 7	625
Males, 278; females, 347	625
Of the lunatics at home, the number of proper subjects for hospital treatment was—independent, 323; pauper, 206	
Lunatics of Massachusetts who are at hospitals for the insane, properly so called, both in and out of the State	1,141
Males, 522; females, 619	1,141
Natives of America, 705; foreigners, 436	1,141
Curable, 206; incurable, 935	1,141
In prisons within the State—natives, 10; foreigners, 11	21
Males, 16; females, 5	21
In "receptacles"—two imperfect asylums at Ipswich and East Cambridge, each connected with a house of correction—natives, 54; foreigners, 92	
Males, 92; females, 54	146
Convicts—in Ipswich receptacle, 8; in prisons, 8	16
In nineteen small towns in the State there are no lunatics.	

A careful perusal of the foregoing statistics will suggest to the mind of the reader many of the ideas which are expressed at length in the report. But from that portion of the document which relates to pauperism, and its connection with insanity, we must be permitted, in justice to our readers, as well as to the author, whose views are original, to make some extracts.

"It is worth while to look somewhat at the nature of poverty, its origin, and its relation to man and to society. It is usually considered as a single outward circumstance—the absence of worldly goods; but this want is a mere incident in this condition—only one of its manifestations. Poverty is an inward principle, inrooted deeply within the man, and running through all his elements; it reaches his body, his health, his intellect, and his moral powers, as well as his estate. In one or other of these elements it may predominate, and in that alone he may seem to be poor; but it usually involves more than one of the elements, often the whole. Hence we find that, among those whom the world calls poor, there is less vital force, a lower tone of life, more ill health, more weakness, more early death, a diminished longevity. There is also less self-respect, more idiocy and insanity, and more crime than among the independent.

"The preponderance of mental defect and disease is unquestionably shown by the comparison of the number of lunatics and idiots in the two classes. None could for a moment suppose that the total of these classes, the independent and the pauper, are in this ratio.

"The whole number of permanent and temporary paupers who were relieved or supported from the public treasury in Massachusetts, during the last

year, was 23,125. At the same time the calculated population of the State was 1,124,675; of whom 1,102,551 were independent and self-supporting. These are in the ratio of 1 to 47; whereas the lunatics are in the ratio of 72.9 independent to 100 paupers. Comparing these ratios, we find that the pauper class furnishes, in ratio of its numbers, sixty-four times as many cases of insanity as the independent class. A similar law of distribution prevails in England and Wales."

There is an error in this method of calculation, founded in the fact that many of the insane paupers were self-supporting persons when they became insane, or had, and still have friends by whom they might be supported. This error is mentioned in the report, yet the author arrives at the conclusion that "if all the self-sustaining poor were included with the paupers in the calculation, there will unquestionably be found a much greater ratio of lunatics among them than among the classes more favoured in respect to outward estate."

"It may be supposed from what has been already said, that much of poverty has a common origin with insanity; both of them grow out of and represent internal mental character, or physical condition, as well as external circumstances. Men of unbalanced minds and uncertain judgment do not see the true nature and relation of things, and they manifest this in the management of their common affairs. They do not adapt the means which they possess or use to the ends which they desire to produce. Hence they are unsuccessful in life; their plans of obtaining subsistence for themselves or their families, or of accumulating property, often fail; and they are consequently poor, and often paupers. This unbalanced and ill-regulated mind, and these wayward or loose habits of thought, are among the common causes of insanity."

"The weak mind cannot grasp any complicated design in affairs, nor combine means to produce ends, nor lay and carry out plans of business; the unstable mind changes its purposes, and does not carry out its plans, however well laid. Both of these fail of securing worldly prosperity, and often bring on poverty and pauperism, and they also often produce insanity. People of this class falter beneath the struggles and trials of life, and disappointments bear them down. Their minds become more and more unbalanced and irregular, and at length disordered."

"Likewise some physical causes have their doubly destructive influence upon both the estate and the mind. Intemperance in stimulating drinks, and all sorts of dissipation, disturb and exhaust the brain, and affect its power of correct and ready action; and hence the mind becomes wayward, its operations uncertain and unfitted for the business of life. Hence follow derangements in the affairs of the world, and ill-success and poverty. Hence, too, follow disorders of the nervous system and insanity, which, according to hospital records, find their most common origin in the exciting and exhausting effects of alcohol, especially among the poor. Whatever depreciates the vital energies lowers the tone of the muscles, and diminishes the physical force, and lessens thereby the power of labour and of production. It also lowers the tone of the brain, and the capacity of self-management. In this state the cerebral organ struggles, and may be deranged; consequently we find in the hospital records that ill-health is one of the most commonly assigned causes of insanity. It has its first depressing effect on the energy of physical action and the soundness of the judgment in worldly affairs, and next on the power and discipline of the mental faculties."

The conclusion is arrived at that "the native insane were one in four hundred and forty-five of the native population, and the foreign insane were one in three hundred and sixty-eight of the whole number of aliens in the State." One reason of the greater proportion among the foreigners is believed to be the much larger relative number of them who are poor; another, or others, are found in their habits, condition, and character.

"While 36 per cent. of the American lunatics were sent to the Worcester Hospital within three months after their supposed attack, 70 per cent. of the foreign lunatics were sent in the same period; and while 43 per cent. of the natives were not sent until their disease had been established a year or more, only 11 per cent. of the aliens were kept away so long."

The whole number of insane males is to the whole number of male inhabitants of the State as 1 is to 442; the same proportion of females as 1 to 413. The proportion of insane foreign males to the alien male population is as 1 to 435; that of alien females as 1 to 326.

Idiots.

"The witnesses were especially requested to regard the scientific and recognized distinction between lunatics and idiots, and cautioned against the commonly received idea that the term *idiocy* should be applied to all who are deprived of mental power. An idiot is one who was originally destitute of mind, or in whom the mental faculties have not been developed. Those who once had the use of their mental faculties, but have lost them through the process of disease, are not idiots, but demented, deprived of mind which had been once enjoyed. This is a very common result of insanity."

Whole number of idiots in the State	1,087
Males, 622; females, 465	1,087
Natives of America, 1,043; foreigners, 44	1,087
Paupers—Americans, 394; foreigners, 24	418
Independent—Americans, 649; foreigners, 20	669
Under 16 years of age, 254; 16 and over, 799; not stated, 34	1,087
Subjects for hospital, 61.	

Ten of the foreign pauper idiots "were children under sixteen years of age, and probably were brought with their parents, who were naturally unwilling to leave them behind. Only fourteen of these paupers were over sixteen years old. And these are all that could by any means be supposed to be sent to this country from poorhouses abroad to be supported by public charity here; and there is no ground of suspicion that any of these were sent here for this purpose."

"The idiots bear a much larger proportion to the lunatics among the natives than among the foreigners, being in the ratio of 51 native and 7 foreign idiots for 100 lunatics in each class respectively. Although the foreign constitute so small a proportion of all the idiots in Massachusetts, and although the idiots constitute so small a proportion of the foreigners whose minds are defective or deranged, there is probably a large proportion of these native idiots who are children of foreigners, though born in this country."

Among the coloured population of the State there are 9 lunatics and 10 idiots.

to the whole State there is	1 lunatic to every	427 inhabitants.
"	1 idiot to every	1,034 "
"	1 either lunatic or idiot to every	302 "
Of the natives there is	1 lunatic to every	446 "
"	1 idiot to every	889 "
"	1 either lunatic or idiot to every	295 "
Of the foreigners, there is	1 lunatic to every	384 "
"	1 idiot to every	7,931 "
"	1 either lunatic or idiot to every	367 "
Of coloured people, there is	1 lunatic to every	1,025 "
"	1 idiot to every	922 "
"	1 either lunatic or idiot to every	485 "

The report proceeds in an exposition of the "interest of the Commonwealth in, and its responsibility for, the proper care of the insane," and of the method by which the "increase of insane pauperism may be prevented." The means suggested for the attainment of this object is that of "requiring the towns to take early measures for the cure of their pauper lunatics who are curable, and also of all others who, though independent, yet, by reason of their lunacy, are likely to become chargeable to the public treasury."

But this cannot be done unless there be a liberal amount of hospital accommodations. The returns in the report show that there are 1713 lunatics (at

homo and at public institutions), and 61 violent and dangerous idiots; a total of 1774, "for whom the accommodations, or the restoring powers of a hospital should be provided." The Commission examined all the public establishments in which the insane may be legally confined, and a brief description of each is embodied in the report. The four public hospitals for the insane, at Worcester, Taunton, Somerville, and Boston, and the private establishments at Pepperell and Dorchester, have suitable accommodations for but 1017 patients. All the public institutions are full, some of them crowded beyond their proper capacity, and there are 719 persons who now need, but have not, these advantages: 610 of these are at their homes, and the remainder in establishments, from which it is deemed expedient that they should be removed.

One of the specified objects of the Commission was "to see what further accommodations, if any, are needed for the relief and care of the insane." From the facts just mentioned, the conclusion is derived that "the time is ripe for a new effort for those lunatic patients who are at their homes, to save those who are curable from permanent insanity, and give to the others who cannot be saved such an asylum of protection as their own good and the interests of the State demand."

Under this belief, and in pursuance of the duties prescribed, letters were addressed to twenty American physicians, who are, or have been, Superintendents of institutions for the insane, asking them "to advise as to the best method of distributing and providing for the insane."

"Whether it were best to provide, in one hospital, for all classes and kinds of insane persons, male and female, independent and pauper, foreign and native, curable and incurable, innocent and criminal, as is generally done in the United States:

"Or in separate establishments:

"For the males and for the females; or,

"For the independent and the pauper; or,

"For the foreigners and the natives; or,

"For the curable and the incurable; or,

"For the criminals, as proposed by Mr. Ley, of the Oxford and Berks Asylum, and sustained by the English Commissioners on Lunacy.

"They were also asked to advise us to the number that, 'regarding the comfort and improvement of the patients,' can properly be accommodated in one institution; and what number in reference to each of the preceding classifications which should be advised."

Similar letters were also sent to several gentlemen in England and Scotland, who are best known for their intimacy with the subjects in question. All but two of the letters to Americans, and "most of those" to the Europeans, were answered.

"Most of the superintendents of the American hospitals advise that separate institutions should be prepared for males and for females." Two of the British, on the contrary, say that "they should be united;" but the Commission is of opinion that all the advantages derived from separate institutions "are more than counterbalanced by the increase of travel made necessary" thereby.

In regard to distinct hospitals for the curable and the incurable, "the plan now pursued, in nearly all the hospitals of this country and elsewhere, of having both classes together, is deemed the best."

"With one partial exception," the proposition to have separate establishments for the independent and the pauper insane, "finds no favour with any of our Superintendents." In England, this separation is in practice, and is generally recommended. But the report proceeds to show, that what may be proper and best in Great Britain, would be the reverse in this country, inasmuch as the paupers and the poorer classes there are much less intelligent, and less accustomed to the comforts of life, than are those of the United States. The Commission, however, recommends that separate provision be made for the State pauper insane, who are now in the lunatic hospitals, State almshouses, prisons, etc.

All suitable authorities repudiate the idea of the propriety of placing criminal lunatics among the ordinary patients of the hospitals; and yet, both hers

and in Great Britain, this practice is in vogue. The Commission recommends that, if a hospital for the State pauper insane be erected, "it should include strong and suitable wards for the criminal insane, where they could be securely kept by themselves."

"It is the unanimous opinion of the American Association of Medical Superintendents of Insane Asylums, that not more than two hundred and fifty patients should be gathered into one establishment, and that two hundred is a better number." The American gentlemen to whom letters were addressed concur therein; "or, if they differ, it is by assigning a smaller number." * * "The policy which has built large establishments for the insane, is a questionable one as applied to economy. * * * Besides the increased cost of maintaining, and the diminished efficiency of a large establishment, there is the strong objection of distance and difficulty of access, which must limit the usefulness of a large hospital in the country, and prevent its diffusing its benefits equally over any considerable territory to whose people it may open its doors." From the annals of the State Lunatic Asylum at Worcester, for twenty years, it is shown that, "while Worcester County sent one in 100.8 of its people to the hospital, Hampden sent one in 178.8; Barnstable one in 285; Franklin one in 290, and Berkshire one in 307;" the proportion diminishing as the distance of the counties, respectively, from the hospital, increases.

"The general plan of hospitals for all patients, the curable and incurable, the mild, troublesome, and the dangerous, seems to the Commissioners to be the best for their comfort and improvement, as well as a matter of economy."

A law passed by the legislature of 1836, required "the counties to provide suitable apartments in the houses of correction for the insane and idiotic persons not furiously mad;" but, "in eleven counties it has been a dead letter, and entirely inoperative, and in all the counties it has failed to answer its purpose. The Commissioners conferred with "the sheriffs, or overseers, or masters of the houses of correction, and jailers, who had the immediate charge or the general oversight of twenty of these prisons, and several of the physicians who attended upon these patients when sick. * * They all, with one modified exception, concur in the belief, that the system of confining the insane in any apartments of the prisons, or the connection of the establishments for lunatics in any way with the houses of correction was a bad one, and operated unfavourably both for the diseased patient and the criminal."

A number of State pauper insane are in each of the three State Almshouses at Moonson, Tewksbury, and Bridgewater. "It was the opinion of each of the Superintendents" of these establishments, "that the mingling of the State paupers, sane and insane, made the whole more difficult and expensive to manage. It cost more labour, watchfulness, and anxiety to take care of them together, than it would to take care of them separately." Many of the evils arising from this commingling are specified by them in communications to the Commissioners, which are quoted in the report.

The buildings of the lunatic hospital at Worcester are defective in architectural arrangement, as compared with those of similar institutions recently founded. The grounds have become very valuable, and inconveniences have arisen from the growth of the city around them. It has, therefore, been proposed to sell the whole establishment, and create another, more remote from the densely settled portion of the city. The consideration of this subject was also confided to the Commission.

In reference to the various subjects thus committed to them, the Commissioners recommend—

"1. That a new hospital be now erected, in order to accommodate those who are not yet in any such institution, and especially the curable and furious patients.

"2. That the consideration of the sale of the hospital at Worcester be postponed until the third hospital shall be ready for occupancy; and then, if deemed expedient by the legislature, be sold, and another erected in its stead, within the city of Worcester.

¹ The State has two lunatic hospitals; one at Worcester, the other at Taunton.

"3. That the legislature take into consideration the plan of providing for the State pauper lunatics in a separate hospital, suitable to their condition and wants, where the curables may be restored, and the incurable be properly and comfortably kept.

"4. That the law of 1836, ordering the creation of county receptacles, be then repealed, and the counties be relieved of the responsibility of providing for the wants of the State.

"5. That all the laws in respect to insanity and hospitals be revised, and reduced to a code more suitable to the wants and the practice of the times."

They advise that the new hospital shall be upon one of the great thoroughfares of the State, near some large town or village; that it have not less than 250 or 200 acres of land, and that it be made for not over 250 patients; expressing the opinion that "one for 200 would be probably more advantageous to its great purpose—the healing and the management of the insane, and consequently more profitable to the State." They also advise, "that, in selecting a location, no regard be paid to inducements that may be held out by towns, by the offer of lands, or of subscriptions to aid in the purchase, and that no gifts be accepted that will imply any obligation of the State to continue the institution in a place where it may seem expedient to remove it; and no lesser present interest be allowed in any way to compromise the greater and future interests of the State, and the lunatics for whom the whole institution is to be created. Like discreet individuals, the State should go into the market, make its selection with the sole view of effecting the final purpose, purchase its lands, and pay the usual price, and then be independent of all further obligations."

The objects of this commission were of great import, regarded in the light of either medical science, humanity, or political economy. The pursuit of them involved a vast amount of labour; the results of which are embodied in a work which, in its kind, has never been equalled on this side of the Atlantic, never excelled beyond it. Its statistics are probably more accurate than any of a similar kind which have ever been collected. It is replete with suggestions which, although intended for specific and local application, will be of essential importance and assistance, in each and every other of the States of the Union where the same or similar subjects may come before the attention of the legislature or its Commissioners.

P. E.

ART. XV.—*On the Organic Diseases and Functional Disorders of the Stomach.* By GEORGE BROWN, M. D., F. R. S., Professor of Medicine in King's College, London, &c. &c. Philadelphia: Blanchard & Lea. 1856. 8vo. pp. 252.

THE lectures comprised in the present volume have, nearly all of them, appeared before in one of the weekly medical journals of London. They are here collected together in a more convenient form, with such additions and corrections as the subsequent experience of the author had suggested. They present a very clear and sensible exposition of the leading diseases, functional and organic, to which the stomach is liable. The great aim of the author in his discussion of these is to present such views of their etiology and pathology, sanctioned by his own observations and those of the leading authorities of the profession, as are calculated to lead to a correct diagnosis and successful treatment. He indulges but little, if any, in more theoretical disquisitions; his teachings are restricted to the exposition of well authenticated facts, and their direct practical bearing.

The first two lectures, with the exception of a few introductory remarks on the difficulties attending the study of stomachic disorders, are devoted to a consideration of self-digestion of the stomach, or the softening and destruction of the coats of that organ from the action of the gastric juice after death. The different circumstances under which this accident occurs—its essential charac-